



**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF
THE EDINA PLANNING COMMISSION
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 2001
7:30 P.M.
EDINA CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
4801 WEST 50TH STREET**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chair, Gordon Johnson, John Lonsbury, Ann Swenson, David Byron, David Runyan, Charles Ingwalson, Geof Worker and Lorelei Bergman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Helen McClelland

Staff Present:

Craig Larsen and Jackie Hoogenakker

I. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

August 29, 2001

II. NEW BUSINESS:

Planning Commission Case P-01-2

Applicant:

SMB Operating Company, LLC
Northco Real Estate Services

Location:

6545 France Avenue South

Comprehensive Plan designation:

Medical

Zoning:

Regional Medical, RMD

Request:

Final Development Plan approval to permit construction of a 3-story, 65,596 square foot addition to the existing improvements on the property. A parking garage below the addition would add 75 parking spaces. The proposed additional deck over the existing ramp would add 154 spaces. Total parking after the addition would be 1,274 spaces.

Mr. Larsen delivered the staff report and introduced the members of the development team of SMB Operating Company and Northco Real Estate Services; Mr. Dennis Zylla, Bruce Carlson, Todd Young and Paul Carlson.

Commissioner Swenson asked Mr. Larsen if he believes the West 65th Street intersection is adequate. Mr. Larsen said if the proponents respond to the points stipulated by the engineering department to add a sidewalk along West 65th Street, remove one curb cut on West 65th Street, and combine the easterly lot driveway with ramp driveway the intersection will be adequate.

Chairman Johnson questioned if staff believes parking will be adequate, and if not would a Proof-of-Parking agreement be appropriate in this instance. Mr. Larsen said to date the formula set forth in the city code appears to work well. A Proof-Of-Parking agreement is something the City has required in the past in certain instances, adding he is not sure if this is one of those instances. Continuing, Mr. Larsen said it appears to him from the plan presented if parking were to become an issue an additional deck could be added to the east ramp. Mr. Larsen stated staff also believes parking will be carefully monitored by the building management team to assure parking demands are met.

Chairman Johnson asked if the proponents ever considered “going up” instead of constructing an addition on the north side.

Mr. Zylla said that was considered but aborted because the present building structure cannot support additional floors.

Commissioner Lonsbury commented he also has a concern parking at this medical campus may not be adequate. He pointed out this immediate area (hospital, medical office building) will be heavily utilized and parking demands and traffic flow must be met. Mr. Larsen agreed and explained at present the subject site has available parking stalls and also leases 80 parking spaces to neighboring properties. Mr. Larsen acknowledged at peak times the lot may appear “full” but spaces are available, though they may not be located in the most desired spot. Mr. Larsen concluded it has been the past experience of city staff that property owners police their sites well to ensure their clients parking needs have been met.

Chairman Johnson interjected when he goes to the doctor at this site he has a difficult time finding a parking space. Mr. Larsen said to date the City has not received any complaints regarding the inadequacy of parking. Mr. Larsen acknowledged when paid parking on this site was implemented staff spent a considerable amount of time fielding complaints, but since paid parking was eliminated staff has not received any complaints with regard to parking.

Commissioner Swenson said she remembers well when paid parking was implemented on this site, and acknowledged many users of the medical office building were angry about the paid parking implementation including her.

Commissioner Byron asked Mr. Larsen if the proponents have agreed to the stipulations from the engineering department. Mr. Larsen said the proponents are in agreement with the requirements from the engineering department.

Mr. Dennis Zylla and Mr. Bruce Carlson presented to the Commission their goals for the expansion and remodel of the Southdale medical building.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Carlson if he is willing to enter into a Proof-Of-Parking agreement. Mr. Carlson said Southdale Medical building will voluntarily increase parking if the need arises. Chairman Johnson stated a Proof-Of-Parking agreement is a safety valve for the City ensuring that parking demands will be met. Mr. Carlson said he is not sure how to respond to the request for a written agreement. Continuing, Mr. Carlson pointed out with the proposed addition and renovations to the campus parking spaces continue to exceed ordinance requirements. Mr. Carlson reported city staff is aware patrons of the hospital continually use the Southdale Medical building campus parking lot and plans will be implemented to reduce crossover parking. This will free up a number of spaces on the north side of the lot. Mr. Larsen interjected that the City on a number of occasions has worked with the medical buildings management with regard to crossover parking from hospital patrons, and if the medical center implements its plans to reduce the crossover parking, more spaces will be available.

Commissioner Swenson asked Mr. Carlson if he plans to impose paid parking. Mr. Carlson said there will not be paid parking on this campus. The only paid parking on this site will be individual contracts with physicians for underground parking

Commissioner Runayn asked if there would be a ramp connection between the ramp and the new addition. Mr. Carlson responded there will be a ramp connection on the 2nd floor.

Commissioner Workinger said in listening to the conversations thus far that he was unaware of the crossover-parking situation on West 65th Street. He stated this is a safety issue. Mr. Larsen agreed. He said it is a safety issue and city staff and medical office management have been working to eliminate this habit. It is dangerous for pedestrians to run across the street from one location to

another. Commissioner Workinger stressed this really concerns him and asked hospital staff if the tunnel between the medical office building and hospital is ever used. Mr. Carlson said medical staff has always used this tunnel and the more savvy hospital visitors have also found the tunnel.

Commissioner Swenson asked Mr. Carlson if the facility will continue to lease spaces to neighbors after the addition is completed. Mr. Carlson said spaces will no longer be leased.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Larsen if he believes a Proof-Of-Parking agreement may be “over-kill”. Mr. Larsen said in his opinion, yes, but added Northco will have to be diligent in policing their lot for crossover parking and to ensure all parking demands are met.

Commissioner Lonsbury commented he hopes the exterior building materials used in the proposed addition will match what exists today and noted he is very unhappy with the result of materials used in the hospital expansion.

Mr. Carlson explained the materials used will be complimentary, and will meet all standards stipulated by the ordinance and uniform building code. He told the Commission he believes the new addition needs to tie into the existing building while depicting the new architectural flavor and materials of the 21st century.

A brief discussion ensued regarding type of building materials used, color and the changes in materials over the last 30 years.

Mr. Golden, resident of Point of France told the Commission in his opinion traffic resulting from the previously approved hospital expansion will increase congestion in the immediate area, and pointed out the proposal before you this evening will only add to that congestion.

Commissioner Runyan moved to recommend Final Development Plan approval subject to the plans presented, staff requirements and requirements stipulated by the engineering department. Commissioner Workinger seconded the motion. Ayes, Byron, Ingwolson, Runyan, Workinger, Bergman, Johnson. Nays, Swenson, Lonsbury.

Commissioner Swenson commented she wants the City to ensure that stacking and traffic flow from Cross-town 62 is carefully considered, monitored, and addressed. She acknowledged the proposed changes to this intersection, but stated she wants assurance the City will be vigilant in monitoring Cross-town 62 at Valley View Road.

Mr. Larsen agreed this intersection needs to be addressed and is something the city has been working on over the past five years. Chairman Johnson noted any backup in this area could transfer traffic to other streets.

Commissioner Lonsbury commented there might come a point when we have to say no to development in certain areas.

III. OTHER BUSINESS:

Discussion on car washes as accessory structures

Mr. Larsen told the Commission over the last month he spoke with other cities asking them if they have similar facilities. Mr. Larsen said other cities either have not dealt with this request, or if they have they face the same questions we have. Mr. Larsen said at this time he has no recommended language changes to the Ordinance.

Commissioner Ingwalson said in reality the proposal on 54th and France is state of the art, and maybe to have an educated discussion we need input from the industry. Mr. Larsen agreed, he pointed out this is a state of the art operation that we have no track record on. He said the ordinance could lag behind technology. Continuing, Mr. Larsen reported he uses this facility on a regular basis and believes the new technology of 3 to 4 cars being washed at one time may speed up the service, adding this concept is new to everyone including the property owner.

Commissioner Byron said he is sensing at this time there is nothing to recommend. Mr. Larsen said that is correct, he would like to continue looking into this and observe the operation when it is on line.

Commissioner Runyan commented if he recalls variances were granted to allow this facility and suggested this could also be looked at as a variance issue. Commissioner Lonsbury agreed, he said his concern is also with setbacks.

Commissioner Swenson added one of her concerns is the potential for ice build up and maybe the Commission didn't consider that adequately when approval was granted.

Chairman Johnson suggested talking with members of the industry to obtain their input before any changes to the ordinance are made. Mr. Larsen said he would contact people in the industry for their input.

Members of the Commission directed Mr. Larsen to speak with business operators in the carwash/service industry and report back to them.

Discussion on setbacks from ponds

Chairman Johnson explained he realized at a zoning board meeting that there are continual requests for variances from setbacks to waterbodies. Chairman Johnson said he wonders if city staff should be allowed to grant these variances on an administrative level or change the code requirement.

Mr. Larsen said he believes it would be a good idea to change code language to reflect a more reasonable number. Mr. Larsen explained in 1992 the zoning ordinance was amended and one point amended was the setback from our naturally occurring lakes and waterbodies. In the past the setback was 25 feet. In 1992 that setback was changed to 50 feet. Mr. Larsen acknowledged in many cases (especially in east Edina) that change technically created many non-conforming situations for Edina residents that reside on waterbodies. Mr. Larsen said the reasoning behind the jump from 25 to 50 feet and as high as 100 feet for new subdivisions was to err on the side where the city would have more control, but this decision has created a need for variances and in some cases the end result was not desirable when the code was strictly enforced.

Commissioner Ingwalson asked Mr. Larsen if he knows how many variances have been granted since 1992. Mr. Larsen said he is unsure of that number but acknowledged to the best of his knowledge the majority of those request have been granted.

Chairman Johnson asked Mr. Larsen to review past variance requests as they relate to setbacks from waterbodies and report back to the Commission in the future on his findings. Mr. Larsen agreed and also asked the Commission to note it may be warranted to review the water body setback clause in the subdivision ordinance. Expanding, Mr. Larsen explained when his previous reference to undesirable outcomes was stated he was referring to the development on Harold Woods Lane. He pointed out the Commission and Council strictly adhered to the subdivision standards which created houses being constructed closer to the street and very wide.

Report on Amendment Change

Mr. Larsen reported to the Commission an amendment has been added to the zoning ordinance with regard to vote on rezoning issues. Mr. Larsen explained in the past for a rezoning to be approved at Council level a 4/5's vote was required. That requirement is now 3/5's. Mr. Larsen said he believes the only rezoning that retains the 4/5's vote is residential to commercial.

Commissioner Byron asked Mr. Larsen if this change was mandated by the State. Mr. Larsen responded that is correct. Commissioner Byron asked Mr. Larsen what he needs from the Commission on this matter. Mr. Larsen said a motion acknowledging this change.

Commissioner Workinger moved to acknowledge the change to the ordinance with regard to the vote on rezoning issues. Commissioner Bergman seconded the motion. All voted aye; motion carried.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Jackie Hoogenakker